



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE NEW REIGN IN ENGLAND.

BY SYDNEY BROOKS.

KING EDWARD'S death naturally spoiled to some extent Mr. Roosevelt's visit. There had been prepared for him a welcome such as England has never, perhaps, accorded to any foreigner. The greetings he received on the Continent were to have reached their climax in the official, and still more the popular, enthusiasm that was awaiting him when he stepped on British soil. The whole country was looking forward with an intensity of interest, unique in my experience, to entertaining him and to being entertained by him. Most of these anticipations had, of course, to be foregone. The death of the King and the accession of the new sovereign threw Mr. Roosevelt into the shade and converted his stay in England from a public into a private function. Nevertheless, the ex-President made the most of his limited opportunities, met, with hardly an exception, every one who amounted to anything, received the freedom of the city in the Guildhall, was publicly honored both by Oxford and Cambridge, and contrived to give the English people a taste of his quality. The English people, I need hardly add, found the taste very much to their liking. They had never encountered, they had hardly ever imagined, any one at all like Mr. Roosevelt. On all with whom he came in contact he left an impression of admiration dashed with amazement. The prodigious vitality, the fulness, vehemence, and prismatic play of his talk, conquered alike publicists, divines, statesmen, journalists, sportsmen, administrators, authors, and undergraduates. No one could have had a greater social success and no one could have deserved it or enjoyed it more thoroughly. Directly King Edward's funeral was over, the public began to transfer its attention to Mr. Roosevelt and to show an insatiable appetite for a daily record of his doings and sayings. It was, of

course, expected of him that, having lectured the Parisians on the iniquity of race-suicide and the good people of The Hague on the righteousness of war, he would not leave England without having had his say on some topic of controversy. His chance came when the freedom of the city was presented to him at the Guildhall before an audience that included much of what is best in England.

After saying many things that were both pleasant and true about British rule in East Africa, Uganda, and the Soudan, Mr. Roosevelt proceeded to say many other things that were more true than pleasant about British rule in Egypt. Ought he to have said them? Well, he would not be Mr. Roosevelt if he hadn't; and personally, although many journals complained of the impropriety of his utterance and many more disputed its philosophy and its facts, I believe that he rendered England a conspicuous service by speaking out. No Englishman, unless it be Lord Cromer, who, by the bye, punctuated Mr. Roosevelt's speech with approving "Hear, hears," could have so effectually compelled the nation to face the situation in Egypt and to realize the perils that hesitancy and a misguided sentimentalism are storing up on the banks of the Nile. If it be said—and naturally it was said—that, after all, it was none of Mr. Roosevelt's business, the answer was that he could not make a more substantial return for the honor done him than to warn his hosts of the danger that threatened their interests from the aims and character of Egyptian Nationalism. Three-fourths of the Guildhall speech was a eulogy of British administration that must have convinced every ruler and statesman on the Continent that the British Empire has in Mr. Roosevelt a resolute and appreciative friend. The other fourth was a criticism, a just and pertinent criticism, of the defects of British rule in one particular district. No doubt it was the kind of criticism that Sir Edward Grey, who is responsible for British policy in Egypt and who was present at the Guildhall meeting, did not relish. None the less, its ultimate effect will, I believe, be good. Thanks to Mr. Roosevelt, the Egyptian problem will from now onwards take the place that its seriousness demands. Almost all who are acquainted with its principal features welcomed the ex-President's outspokenness as being precisely what was needed to stir the British people out of their habitual somnolence and induce them to take the necessary

precautions against a menace the reality of which is indisputable. Englishmen as a whole, so far from resenting Mr. Roosevelt's speech, were grateful for it, and willingly overlooked the breach of the conventions he committed in making it. They would not care to see such a harangue as he delivered become the common form of acknowledgment among recipients of the freedom of the city; but they are well aware there is no danger of that. In England as in America it is now thoroughly understood that the ex-President is a law unto himself, that the precedents he seems to set are really not precedents at all because no one but himself would venture to follow them, and that his departures from the ordinary ways of doing things are always designed to serve a specific and practical end. It is safe to say that as the result of his visit England feels more than ever drawn toward Mr. Roosevelt and will follow his future career with an interest such as no other statesman of to-day is able to inspire.

But the death of King Edward had other and more momentous results than that of diverting attention from the ex-President. For one thing it completely transformed the political situation. It interposed a providential truce precisely at the moment when everything seemed hurrying towards an irrepressible crisis. Had King Edward lived we should now be either engaged in, or on the very verge of, a general election; the Prime Minister would have approached the Crown with a request for guarantees that the opposition of the House of Lords to the Liberal programme would be overborne by the creation of, or by the threat to create, a sufficient number of Peers to give the Liberals a temporary majority in the Second Chamber; the request would undoubtedly have been refused; and all parties would have been feverishly preparing for the inevitable combat, a combat that would have involved the very foundations of the British State. No doubt King Edward would have endeavored to postpone or avert it; but there is unhappily little reason to believe he would have succeeded. It was one of the curious features of his reign that the normal action of the Crown in composing differences between the Government and the Opposition was virtually suspended. A great figure and a still greater force on the stage of European politics, King Edward failed to exercise in the affairs of his own kingdom anything like the authority that Queen Victoria commanded. On some of the reasons for this failure I touched at

the time the Lords threw out the Budget, and it is not now necessary to recapitulate them. They were the product at bottom of the social alienation which existed between King Edward and the old English aristocracy, and which considerably detracted from his influence as umpire whenever a clash occurred between the Commons and the Lords. On three separate occasions he strove to save the measures of the late Government from destruction in the Upper House and each time he failed. He sought, and sought in vain, to effect a compromise on the Education Bill of 1906, to bring about the acceptance of the Licensing Bill two years later, and to prevent the rejection of Mr. Lloyd George's Budget. It is not, therefore, likely that he would have succeeded at the eleventh hour in heading off the gathering crisis amid which his closing days were passed, a crisis in which party feelings have been stirred to the last degree of exasperation. It may, indeed, be said without any exaggeration that the shock of King Edward's death and the emotions roused by it have contributed more to the cause of political peace than he could have effected had he lived.

The change wrought by the demise of the Crown is threefold. In the first place the people feel that to hold an orgy of factional strife over the grave of Edward the Peacemaker is to dishonor both his memory and their own best instincts. A month or more has passed, as I write, since the death of the most popular sovereign who ever sat on the throne of Great Britain; and every minute has reinforced the national desire that party wranglings should cease. A truce leading to a settlement by consent is, it is felt, the only tribute that can worthily be rendered to the dead King. It is a tribute, it is also felt, not less due to his successor. The general notion of King George V as a somewhat colorless and indeterminate personality is, I am assured, altogether wrong. But no sovereign, however competent or resolute, could possibly wish to open his reign by making the most momentous political decision that any British ruler has been called upon to make for nearly a hundred years. No sovereign, again, would wish his coronation to take place in the midst of a bitter party turmoil of an incalculably perilous process of Constitutional upheaval. The English people feel profoundly that King George should be allowed fair play, that there should be no attempt to hustle him, that time should be given him to look round and take

a few observations, and that Great Britain cannot plunge forthwith into the passions of party polemics without lowering her whole reputation for sane and dignified politics. What it comes to, therefore, is that the death of King Edward and the accession of King George have tragically disposed the minds of the people, and to some extent of the politicians, towards harmony and appeasement; that the contentions which divide parties, grave and ever vital as they are, seem trivial almost to insignificance in the presence of the national loss; and that the nation never loathed more intensely than at this moment a continuation of the whole wretched controversy, and was never more earnestly set of putting an end to it by compromise.

This disposition towards an armistice is strengthened by the fact that an armistice of a sort is inevitable. Here we reach the second of the changes in the political situation brought about by the King's death. The Ministerial programme of two months ago cannot now be carried out for the simple reason that the accession of a new sovereign makes it obligatory on Parliament to give precedence to business of another kind. The new Civil List has to be arranged; as the Heir-Apparent is still two years under age, a Regency Bill must be brought in and passed; and there is also a strong feeling that King George should be relieved from the necessity of beginning his reign by insulting the religious convictions of many millions of his subjects. The British throne cannot by law be occupied by any one but a Protestant, but, as matters stand at present, the King, in making his Royal Declaration, is obliged to repudiate certain cherished doctrines and practices of Roman Catholicism as "superstitious and idolatrous." I think the general sentiment of the country is all in favor of omitting these obnoxious adjectives. But I am not less sure that the attempt to delete them from the Royal Declaration will not succeed without a certain amount of Parliamentary commotion. On matters of this kind the least pleasing traits in the British character are apt to be the most prominent. Already the familiar fanatics are in full cry. If you had happened to be in the Queen's Hall in London on June 6th you would have found the building crammed with fervid bigots protesting against any alteration in the terms of the Royal Declaration as "a grievous hurt to the feelings of the people of Great Britain and a danger to their liberties." But those who approve the Declaration as it

stands to-day are, I should hope, a noisy but ineffectual minority. The real battle in Parliament is likely to be waged between those who think it enough that the sovereign should declare himself a Protestant and those who think that, in addition, he should disavow Roman Catholicism, but should disavow it in language at which no Catholic could reasonably take offence. There is, as a matter of fact, no legal need for any Declaration at all, the Protestant succession being already amply guaranteed by the Act of Settlement. But, out of deference to the weaker brethren, the Prime Minister is hardly likely to propose that the Declaration, instead of being merely changed, should be done away with altogether. The fight, as I have said, will probably be between those who regard the positive affirmation of Protestantism as sufficient and those who desire in addition a definite but not an insulting repudiation of Catholicism.

But in any case, and even if the question of the Royal Declaration is not taken in hand immediately, enough remains with the Navy Estimates, the new Civil List, the Regency Bill, and the voting of Supply—business which cannot be postponed—to carry the House of Commons well into July. It will then be necessary to introduce the Budget for 1910-11, a development which two months ago hardly anybody anticipated could possibly take place until after a general election. Mr. Lloyd George's new Budget is not, of course, likely to prove so contentious as the old one; but it seems certain that a deficit will have to be faced, that new taxes will have to be imposed, and that if paupers are no longer to be regarded as disqualified for old-age pensions, fresh and productive sources of revenue will have to be found. In any event, the Budget and the necessary business of carrying on the government can hardly be disposed of before the first or second week in August; and by that time it will be time to adjourn for the summer holidays. It appears, therefore, out of the question that the original Ministerial programme of approaching the Crown with a request for guarantees of safe-conduct on behalf of the Liberal bills abolishing the Lords' veto on finance, and severely limiting it on all ordinary measures, can be carried out. One would say definitely that it cannot be carried out were it not for the Lords. When Parliament reassembled on June 8th, the Lords found themselves confronted with two sets of resolutions; first, the Rosebery Resolutions laying down the general principles

for a reform of the Upper House, and secondly, and more important, the Government's Resolutions abolishing or restricting the veto. What action the Lords may take in regard to the Rosebery Resolutions is not a matter of very great concern at this moment. But their action in regard to the Government's Resolutions may powerfully affect the course of events. If they were to reject them outright, for instance, the Government could not possibly ignore the challenge, and would be obliged to proceed with its original plan of campaign. If, on the other hand, they were to refuse to discuss them until they had been embodied in the form of a bill, the Government, I apprehend, would scarcely either dissolve or resign without incurring the strong condemnation of public opinion. It would be virtually compelled to hold the question over till the autumn session, if only to avoid the appearance of coercing the new King within a few weeks of his accession. Unless, therefore, the Lords are so unwise as to reject the Government's Resolutions forthwith, the chances, in my judgment, favor the postponement of the Constitutional issue for another three or four months. The prospects of a peaceful settlement in that event will, of course, be correspondingly brighter.

The third essential in which the situation has been changed by King Edward's death is the personality of the sovereign. While in some ways King George is less qualified to grapple with the crisis than was his father, in other ways he is more so. He is, for one thing, a far keener politician and far more intimately acquainted with the pros and cons of the question at issue. Furthermore, he is in touch with the English aristocracy to a considerably greater degree than was King Edward, and could, if necessary, appeal to them with more telling effect. These are valuable assets from the standpoint of a possible accommodation between the parties, and their value is increased, first by the certainty that if the worst comes to the worst King George will not flinch, and secondly by the universal desire, to which I have previously alluded, that the new reign should not be jeopardized by the continuation of a suicidal strife. But a "universal desire" of this nature is necessarily an unorganized desire, and the "average man" is something very different from the average M. P. The country longs for peace, but it has no means of imposing it upon the politicians; and I see no statesman who is strong enough and free enough to take an effective step towards reason and com-

promise. If King George were to stake everything on an endeavor to bring about a give-and-take settlement, he might just succeed; but the effort would have to be prodigious and the risk of failure would be very considerable. The fact is that although there are many propitious influences favoring appeasement, the country is so bereft of really commanding leaders, the difficulties in which each party is involved are so real and complex, and the old Adam of Parliamentary strife is so easily aroused, that to be sanguine of any peaceable adjustment is very difficult. Matters have gone so far that no adjustment is possible without heavy sacrifices on all sides, sacrifices such as the meekest of party leaders would hesitate long before recommending to his followers. While, therefore, one may say that the accession of George V has delayed the consummation of the crisis, and by delaying it has strengthened the hope that it may after all be averted; and while the nation from many and varied motives is zealous for a settlement—I should not care to prophesy that a way out of the tangle will be reached by consent. My impression is rather that sooner or later the struggle will be renewed with all its old bitterness, and that an accommodation in the form of a compromise will only become possible when all the combatants have convinced themselves of the futility of fighting further.

SYDNEY BROOKS.